

February 18, 1999

Spencer Ericson, Associate Regional Administrator
Health Care Financing Administrator - Region VIII
Federal Office Building
Box 1961
Denver, CO 80294

Dear Mr. Ericson:

I apologize for the delay in submitting this Annual Report for FFY 1998 on Montana's Children's Health Insurance Plan. I did not understand that states must submit a plan even though they had no children enrolled in FFY 1998.

A. State Plan Operation Information

Montana's CHIP program did not serve any children in FFY1998. The only data we can report is the information which we submitted and HCFA approved as part of our state plan application for CHIP on the number of uninsured children in Montana. This is found under Part D of this report.

B. Attachment of Quarterly Data in FFY 1998 Annual Reports

Montana's CHIP program did not serve any children in FFY1998.

C. Additional Program Indicator Data

Montana's CHIP program did not serve any children in FFY1998.

D. Baseline Estimates of the Number of Uninsured Children in a State

Montana's CHIP program did not serve any children in FFY1998. The only data we can report is the following information which we submitted and HCFA approved as part of our state plan application for CHIP on the number of uninsured children in Montana.

Section 2.1 CHIP STATE PLAN

HCFA - Please provide more detailed data as required by Section 2102(a)(1) including income and other relevant factors such as age, race and ethnicity and geographic location.

Montana has very little data on the insurance status of its children. No studies have been conducted in the state on this issue. The only information available to us is from the US Census Bureau. We cannot independently validate the census estimates. For this reason,

we propose to conduct a survey using the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) to further define our baseline. We are providing these very preliminary estimates at your request. We are unable to present data broken by race, ethnicity, or geographic location.

Category	# of children per Census Information for CY97	# Estimated to be Uninsured for CY97
At 100% FPL		
Age Under 5	13,509	3,148
Age 5-11	18,667	4,349
Age 12-17	14,847	3,459
Age 18	3,538	925
Total	50,561	11,881
At 150% FPL		
Age Under 5	21,295	3,769
Age 5-11	31,106	5,505
Age 12-17	24,712	4,373
Age 18	5,234	1,039
Total	82,347	14,686
At 200% FPL		
Age Under 5	29,956	4,742
Age 5-11	44,921	7,111
Age 12-17	35,328	5,592
Age 18	6,701	1,190
Total	116,906	18,635
All Children		
Age Under 5	55,660	5,598
Age 5-11	90,359	9,614
Age 12-17	86,732	10,176
Age 18	12,252	1,612
Total	245,003	27,000

*Data is cumulative for each age group and total.

**Methodology for determining the number of Montana children without health insurance. A 9/97 US Census Bureau document estimates the number of children who are uninsured at 23.3% of those 18 and under below the poverty level. Children on Medicaid are counted as insured. This is a national statistic that does not reflect individual state experiences. Each state has different eligibility requirements that are based on poverty levels. Older children were less likely to have health care coverage than younger children. 13.8% of children under 6, 14.6% of children 6-11, and 16.1% of children 12-17 were estimated to be uninsured.

Further estimates are based on US Census Bureau reports on Low Income Uninsured Children by State. In Montana, the number and percent of children under 19 years of age, at or below 200% of poverty, for 1994, 1995, and 1996 is 120,000 children or 48.1% of the population under 19 years of age. Those estimated to be without insurance were 19,000 or 7.9% of the population under age 19. This is 15.83% (19,000/120,000) of those at or below 200% of poverty. The Children's Defense Fund estimates the number of children in Montana who are 18 years of age or younger and without health insurance to be 27,000 or 10.7% of the population of that age group.

HCFA - Please provide further information on how the BRFSS will yield the needed information on insurance status. To what extent does Montana plan to revise the BRFSS so that it covers children without telephone coverage? When does the state anticipate the data for baseline be available?

Questions will be added to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) to determine whether there are children in the family and whether they have creditable insurance coverage. We are examining two options for the baseline survey. We will either add the questions to the existing BRFSS in which case the data will be available by November of 1999 or perform an independent survey to establish baseline data. If we perform an independent survey, we estimate that the baseline data will be available by June 1999. We believe that the baseline will be valid using either method, because of the small number of children (957) that we are planning to enroll in the first phase of the CHIP program. Once we establish the baseline data, we will use additional questions on the BRFSS on an ongoing basis to measure our progress. We do not intend to revise the BRFSS to include children who do not have a telephone. Approximately 94.4% of Montana households have a telephone. This high rate leads us to believe that no revision is necessary.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Dalton, CHIP Coordinator